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To
Entire Instructional Quality Commission
c/o Thomas Adams, Executive Director
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My name is Rama Kelkar and I am a 12th grader at Granada Hills Charter High School in Granada Hills, Los Angeles. I skipped school and flew in person to speak at the November 19th hearing from Los Angeles. Here are my inputs; I got only one minute to speak and did not get a chance to voice all of my opinions.

I have grown up learning about my Hindu heritage at home. But from social studies in 6th grade to AP World History in 10th grade, what I learned in school about my culture had surprisingly little to do with what I had learned at home. Rather than teaching mainstream Hindu concepts, topics like the caste system in 6th grade and the practice of *sati* in 10th grade were overly emphasized. I would come home and tell my parents what I had learned in school, and they would be shocked. These were ideas that they would never have even mentioned to me, because they are so irrelevant to the true essence of Hinduism.

I would specifically point to the section in the early November framework draft that describes the Hindu social structure. I acknowledge that the extremely offensive caste pyramid has been removed (and I thank you kindly for that), but the framework still devotes around 337 out of a total of approximately 900 words on Hinduism to a mistaken interpretation of the social structure (including the completely unnecessary lines 859 to 874 – i.e. “In addition . . . offensive”). It has gone up from around 88 words that existed in your November 2014 draft. Why? Is this in proportion with social structures you describe for other religions? Is this in proportion with seemingly negative aspects for other religions? Is this in line with the norm that has been followed to describe other cultures?

This totally skews the picture about Hinduism. Other more pertinent aspects, such as reverence for nature and Ayurvedic medicine, are barely mentioned, if at all in the 6th grade framework. A more proportionate distribution of words to describe different elements of the culture is necessary to set Hinduism on a fair footing with other cultures and religions.

One of the goals of the Standards for Evaluating Instructional Materials for Social Content is to enable all students to become aware and accepting of religious diversity while being allowed to remain secure in any religious beliefs they may already have. After being presented with a predominantly negative portrayal of Hinduism, however, I lost interest in what was being taught about my religion in school. I separated my culture from my formal education. I was hesitant to acknowledge in school that I was Hindu, because I was afraid my friends would judge me for all the negative things they had heard about Hinduism.

Please remove lines 859 to 874 from the 6th grade framework draft and stop the continued insulting of Hindu kids on the basis of negative portrayal and over emphasis.

Every child, regardless of religion, race, culture, or anything else has the right to feel accepted in the United States of America. I, along with thousands of Hindu teens, want to make absolutely certain that we can hold our heads high and proudly say that we are American and we are Hindu.

Thank you.